

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009

Remarks During a Discussion With General Motors Employees in Lordstown, Ohio

September 15, 2009

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

—the fact is, some of these schools, we've been doing the same things for years, and they're just not working. Okay? If you've got a 50 percent dropout rate, that's just—that is not just bad for the kids who are dropping out, that's bad for the community, that's bad for the country. The main decision for a lot of companies is where can they find skilled workers. And you guys know as well as anybody that it used to be if you wanted to work in an auto plant, you didn't have to really know much about math or computers or what have you. All you had to do was just be willing to work hard.

But these days, even if you're on the line—I haven't looked at this particular plant, but I know that you've got to be able to do some math, you've got to—there's some science and technical issues that are involved. And so how we train our young people is absolutely critical, and we've got to try some different things and some new things that we haven't been trying.

And the other thing we have to do is set up a system of community colleges so that we're constantly retraining. If there is innovation in the auto industry, we want to make sure that workers who are already working are able to go back to school, even if it's part time, night classes, what have you, so that they can then improve their skills. And that's something that has got to be a top priority.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:04 a.m. at General Motors Lordstown Assembly Plant.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : General Motors employees, discussion in Lordstown, OH.

Locations: Lordstown, OH.

Subjects: Education : High school dropout rate; Education : Postsecondary education :: Career training and continuing education; Education : Postsecondary education :: Community colleges; Education : Science and math programs; Education : Technology and innovation, expansion efforts; Ohio : President's visits.